

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 589

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T CAIRO 9796

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF, JO

SUBJECT: TALHUNI/RIFA'I MISSION TO EGYPT

REF: AMMAN 7078

SUMMARY. JORDANIAN SOURCES HERE SAY TALHUNI-RIFA'I MISSION FOCUSED ON PROPOSAL TO CONVENE QUADRIpartite FONMIN MEETING IN AMMAN AT END DECEMBER. FAHMY, HOWEVER, DOES NOT BELIEVE PLO WILL GO TO JORDAN. END SUMMARY.

1. WE HAVE HEARD FROM TWO SOURCES SAME ACCOUNT OF VISIT TO EGYPT BY GOJ ENVOYS TALHUNI AND RIFA'I. INFORMANTS ARE GOJ EMBOFF AND, THROUGH RELIABLE AMERICAN JOURNALIST, GOJ AMBASSADOR TO ARAB LEAGUE.

2. ACCORDING TO BOTH SOURCES, HUSSAIN WISHED TO REGISTER HIS DISPLEASURE THAT HE HAS FULFILLED HIS RESPONSIBILITIES, AS DEFINED BY RABAT DECISIONS, BOTH IN LETTER AND IN SPIRIT; PALESTINIANS, HOWEVER, HAVE DONE NOTHING. FURTHER, SADAT'S WARM RECEPTION OF ABU IYAD ON HEELS OF LATTER'S ANTI-HUSAIN

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REMARKS IN BEIRUT NEEDED SOME EXPLANATION. JORDNAIAN EMBOFF

ADDED THAT NOT ONLY ABU IYAD BUT ALSO PLO NOTABLES ABU DA'UD AND FARUQ QADDUMI HAVE BEEN SAYING PRIVATELY THAT A "POOL OF BLOOD" SEPARATES THEM FROM HUSAIN.

3. GIVEN THIS NEGATIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF PLO, TALHUNI AND RIFA'I PROPOSED THAT QUADRIPARTITE MEETING AT FONMIN'S LEVEL BE HELD IN AMMAN AT END OF DECEMBER. SADAT REPORTEDLY AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD SEND ENVOY (PROBABLY ASHRAF MARWAN) TO AMMAN TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL. EMBOFF ASKED JORDANIAN POLITICAL OFFICER WHAT GOJ POSITION WOULD BE IF SADAT WAS UNABLE TO DELIVER QADDUMI TO AMMAN. JORDANIAN REPLIED ONLY THAT SADAT WOULD BE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE IN THAT CASE.

4. AMBASSADOR RAISED QUESTION OF QUADRIPARTITE MEETING WITH FAHMY DECEMBER 3. FAHMY RESPONDED THAT HE HAD TAKEN NO STEPS TO ARRANGE SUCH A MEETING, BUT MIGHT DO SO AFTER HE TALKS TO ARAFAT, WHO IS DUE HERE IN TWO OR THREE DAYS. FAHMY SAID THAT HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT GOJ IS PRESSING FOR MEETING TO BE HELD IN AMMAN. (COMMENT: THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT REPORT ABOVE IS UNTRUE.) HE MIGHT BE WILLING TO GO TO DAMASCUS BUT NOT TO AMMAN, SINCE HE KNOWS PLO WILL REFUSE TO GO TO JORDAN. IN FAHMY'S VIEW, TALHUNI/RIFA'I MISSION SIGNIFIED AN ATTEMPT BY HUSAIN TO REGAIN A ROLE IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

5. WHEN AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT RESULTS FAHMY EXPECTED FROM A QUADRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, FAHMY SAID HE FRANKLY DID NOT KNOW. PALESTINIANS AND HUSAIN MUST SETTLE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, HE ADDED. IF THEY CANNOT, THAT IS THEIR BUSINESS. GOE IS WILLING TO HELP BUT NOT WILLING TO PRESS ACTIVELY FOR DETENTE BETWEEN THE TWO.

6. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO TAKE JORDANIAN REPORT OF TALHUNI/RIFA'I MISSION AS GENERALLY TRUE. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH SADAT MAY PERHAPS HAVE AGREED TO CONSIDER AMMAN AS LOCUS FOR QUADRIPARTITE MEETING, WE DOUBT HE HAS ANY ILLUSION THAT HE CAN FORCE PLO TO SEND REP TO AMMAN UNTIL PLO JUDGES TIME IS RIPE. IN UNLIKELY EVENT THAT HUSAIN DOES HOST QUADRIPARTITE CONFERENCE, THIS WOULD BE, OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLE DIPLOMATIC COUP FOR JORDAN. IF HE FAILS, THEN HE WILL HAVE PUT OFF THE CONFERENCE FOR SOME WEEKS WHICH, AS REPORTED IN AMMAN 7078, MAY BE HIS REAL INTENTION. HE WILL HAVE ACHEIVED "POSTPONEMENT" ON WHAT SEEM TO US TO BE

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UNIMPEACHABLE GROUNDS, SINCE BOTH RABAT DECISIONS AND ARAFAT'S OWN PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS AFTER THE CONFERENCE INDICATED THAT BOTH GOJ AND PLO (NOT GOJ ALONE) HAVE RESPONSIBILITY IN ARAB EYES TO MEND THEIR FENCES.
EILTS

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